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**From:** HJR153  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 16, 2004 9:11 AM  
**To:** HJR153  
**Subject:** HJR153 - John H. Frye

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Utility Type: all

Company Name: Dominion Power, Verizon, COMCAST

Comments: I strongly recommend the utility lines be buried underground. Doing so should considerably reduce outages caused by bad weather and would reduce high costs of maintaining the above ground lines. Such occasions are becoming routine, at great cost to the utilities, therefore, the consumers. Almost every storm coming through the area, as well as every cold spell during winter results in damage to lines and havoc for phone networks. Recent newspaper articles cite repair loads at three times the normal in Virginia -- leading to overtime requirements for utility workers and excess costs. There are many benefits for burying the lines underground: First, they will be out of the way of ice storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, heavy rains and other severe weather. Secondly, trimming of trees nearby the lines will no longer be required. Thirdly, the cost of procuring and installing poles from which to hang the lines will be eliminated, and fourthly, the sight of lines above ground considered ugly by visitors to Virginia will be removed, a boon for the tourist trade.

No doubt the cost for burying the lines will be considerable, but it's been done before and is being done routinely in new housing developments in Virginia. Following World War II, Germany decided to bury all telephone and power lines. They surely have facts and figures on the costs associated with such a project, as well as the type and costs of any maintenance that might be required on the buried lines. Getting in touch with the German government will provide answers and lessons learned from their efforts to bury the lines. In the 1990's when cable TV came to Germany, they again made a decision to bury the lines. In fact, they decided to run underground lines to every residence in the country -- at significant costs (most assumed by the government, but anyone wishing to be hooked up to cable TV faced a large, c. \$600 connection fee). The result was a totally "wired" country, meaning emergency notices of all sort could be dispatched to every home instantaneously. This

approach, if adopted in Virginia, might lead to financial support from the U.S. Government in the form of a grant. The first step should be legislation requiring that all new construction involving utility lines have them buried underground. Existing lines should be buried following a plan, coordinated with local administrators and when possible with property owners. Check with Germany to see how they did it. The consumer will be the great benefactor in this project, for their electricity, their phone lines, and cable TV will then be protected from natural disasters/accidents and will be continually available to them, just when they are needed most. The utilities should benefit from reduced costs/efforts in maintenance and repair of their lines -- no more extreme overtime requirements, no more calling in other crews from afar to help out.

On the negative side, there may be some landowners who might object to having lines buried on their property. While their objection should be heard, the overriding benefit to the people should outweigh most non-concurrences. The utility's maintenance crews might object, since their workload will be going down -- no more overtime, perhaps no more job. They'll have to find another one and if that proves to be the case, they should receive some assistance in that matter.

This project has tremendous merit and if implemented, will bring confidence, security, and appreciation from the residents of Virginia. You have the opportunity to truly make a significant difference in the lives of Virginia's residents -- I urge you to adopt the project and implement immediately.

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PS - The lines in my neighborhood (Villages of Longmeadow) are already buried.